I.

TERESA
Andrew has chosen me and asked for my hand.
It happened today between five and six in the afternoon.
I don't remember exactly, I had no time to look at my watch,
or catch a glimpse of the clock on the tower of the old town hall.
At such moments one does not check the hour,
such moments grow in one above time.
But even had I remembered to look at the town hall clock,
I could not have done so, for I would have had to
look above Andrew's head.
We were just walking on the right side of the market square when Andrew turned
around and said,
"Do you want to be my life's companion?"
That's what he said. He didn't say: do you want to be my wife,
but: my life's companion.

What he intended to say must have been thought over.
He said it looking ahead, as if afraid
to read in my eyes, and at the same time as if to signify
that in front of us was a road whose end could not be seen
—there was, or at least, could be,
if I replied "Yes" to his question.

I answered "Yes"—not at once,
but after a few minutes,
and yet in the course of those few minutes there was no need for reflection,
no need to struggle between motives.
The answer had almost been determined.
We both knew that it reached deep into the past
and advanced far into the future,
that it penetrated our existence like a weaver's shuttle,
to catch the weft that determines a fabric's pattern.
I remember that Andrew did not turn his eyes to me at once, but looked ahead for quite a while, as if gazing intently at the road before us.

**ANDREW**

I went quite a long way before reaching Teresa, I did not find her at once. I do not even remember if our first meeting was marked by a kind of presentiment. And I don't think I even know what "love at first sight" means. After a time I realized she had come into the focus of my attention, I mean, I had to be interested in her, and at the same time I accepted the fact that I had to. Though I could have behaved differently from the way I felt I must, I thought there would be no point. There must have been something in Teresa that suited my personality.

I thought much at the time about the "alter ego". Teresa was a whole world, just as distant as any other man, as any other woman—and yet there was something that allowed one to think of throwing a bridge.

I let that thought run on, and even develop within me. It was not an assent independent of an act of will. I simply resisted sensation and the appeal of the senses, for I knew that otherwise I would never really leave my "ego" and reach the other person—but that meant an effort. For my senses fed at every step on the charms of the women I met. When once or twice I tried following them, I met solitary islands. This made me think that beauty accessible to the senses can be a difficult gift or a dangerous one; I met people led by it to hurt others—and so, gradually, I learned to value beauty accessible o the mind, that is to say, truth. I decided then to seek a woman who would be indeed my real "alter ego" so that the bridge between us would not be a shaky footbridge among water lilies and reeds.

I met a few girls who absorbed my imagination, and also my thoughts—but at the moments when it seemed to me I was most concerned with them, I suddenly realized that Teresa was still there in my consciousness and memory and I instinctively compared each of them with her. And yet I even wished them to push her from my consciousness; in a way, I counted on it.
And I was ready to follow sensation, strong, forceful sensation.

I wanted to regard love as passion,
as an emotion to surpass all
— I believed in the absolute of emotion.
And that is why I could not grasp
the basis of that strange persistence of Teresa in me,
the cause of her presence,
the assurance of her place in my "ego",
or what creates around her
that strange resonance, that feeling "you ought to".
So I avoided her cautiously, deliberately evaded
everything that could cause even the shadow of a guess.
Sometimes I even tormented her in my thoughts,
while seeing in her my tormentor.
It seemed to me she pursued me with her love,
and that I must cut myself off decisively.
Thus grew my interest in Teresa;
love grew, in a sense, from resistance.
Or love can be a collision
in which two selves realize profoundly
they ought to belong to each other, even though they have no convenient moods and sensations.
It is one of those processes in the universe which bring a synthesis,
unite what was divided, broaden and enrich what was limited and narrow.

TERESA
I must admit Andrew's proposal
was something I did not expect.
I really had no reason to count on it.
It always seemed to me that Andrew did everything
to make me useless to him, and to convince me that this was so.

If I was not quite unprepared for his proposal
it was because I felt that somehow I was the right one for him,
and that I supposed I could love him.
Being aware of that, I must already have loved him.
But that was all.
I never allowed myself to nurse a feeling
that remained unanswered.
Today, however, I can admit to myself
that I did not find it easy.

…

I recall one month particularly,
and in that month, one evening:
we were hiking in the mountains,
a big group of people but very close,
our friendship was especially strong—
we understood one another, perfectly.
Andrew was then quite clearly interested in Christine.
But this did not spoil the pleasure of the ramble for me.
For I was always as hard as a tree
that would rather rot than topple.
If I cried for myself,
it was not from disappointed love.
And yet it was difficult.

That evening, particularly, night fell as we were going down,
and I shall never forget the small lakes that surprised us on the way
like two cisterns of unfathomable sleep.
There was metal asleep, mixed with the reflection
of a bright August night.
And yet there was no moon.

Suddenly, as we were standing and watching
— I shan’t forget this as long as I live—
somewhere above our heads
we clearly heard a call.
It was rather like
wailing or like a groan,
or even a whine maybe.

Everyone held his breath.
It was not clear whether it was a man calling,
or a late bird wailing.
The same call was repeated once more,
and then the boys decided to call back.
Through the quiet sleeping woods,
through the mountain night went a signal.
If it was a man—he would hear it.
The first voice, however, was heard no more.

And just then, when everyone had grown silent,
listening in case the call might ring out once more,
I was suddenly struck by another thought: also about signals;
that thought returned to me today
between Andrew’s profile
and the tower of the old town hall
in our city—
today between five and six in the afternoon,
when Andrew asked me for my hand—
then I was thinking about signals that could not connect.  
It was a thought about Andrew and myself.  
And I felt how difficult it is to live.  
That night was terribly hard for me,  
though it was a truly glorious mountain night,  
and full of nature’s secrets.  
Everything around seemed  
so very necessary  
and so in harmony with the world's totality,  
only man was off balance and lost.  
Perhaps not every human being,  
but I know for certain that I was.  
So today, when Andrew asked,  
"Would you like to become forever my life's companion?",  
after ten minutes I answered "Yes",  
and after a while I asked him if he believed in signals.

ANDREW
Teresa asked me today:  
"Andrew, do you believe in signals?"  
And when I, surprised at this question,  
stopped for a moment  
and looked, astonished, into my fiancée's eyes—  
my fiancée of a quarter of an hour—  
she told me her thoughts,  
those that had been revolving in her head  
since the evening in the mountains.  

How close she passed by me then;  
she almost hemmed me in with her imagination  
and that discreet suffering,  
which at the time I did not want to know,  
and today am willing to regard as our common good.  

Teresa—Teresa—Teresa—  
like a strange focus of my way to maturity—  
no longer a prism of superficial rays,  
but a being of true light.  
And I know I cannot go further.  
I know I shall not seek anymore.  
I only tremble at the thought that  
I could so easily have lost her.  

For several years she had been walking by me, and I did not know that it was she who was walking and maturing.  
I recoiled from accepting
what today is for me a most magnificent gift.
Several years later I see it clearly
that roads which should have diverged
have brought us closer together.
Those years have been invaluable, giving us time
to get our bearings on the complicated
map of signs and signals.

It must be so.
Today I see that my country is also her country,
and, after all, I dreamed of throwing a bridge—

2.

In the evenings, in our old city
(evenings in October begin early)
men leave their offices,
where new housing developments are planned,
women and girls on the way home
look in shop windows.

I met Teresa when she had just paused
in front of a large window
full of ladies' shoes.
I stopped by her quietly and unexpectedly
—and suddenly we were together
on both sides of the big transparent sheet
filled with glowing light.
And we saw our reflections together,
because behind the window display
is a great, immense mirror,
which reflects the shoe models
as well as the people passing on the pavement,
particularly those who have stopped
to look at themselves, or at the shoes.

So when we found ourselves all of a sudden
on both sides of the great mirror
—here alive and real, there reflected—
I—who knows why,
maybe to complete the picture,
but more likely just in answer to my heart's need—
asked, "What are you thinking about, Teresa?"
I asked this almost in a whisper,
for this is how those in love are wont to talk.
TERESA
I wasn't thinking then about signals anymore.
And I wasn't really thinking about Andrew.
I was looking for high-heeled shoes.
There were many sports shoes,
many comfortable walking shoes,
but I was really straining my eyes
for high-heeled shoes.

Andrew is so much taller than I
that I have to add a little to my height
—and so I was thinking about Andrew,
about Andrew and about myself.
I was now constantly thinking about us two;
he must surely think like this too—
so he must rejoice at my thought.

We then began to talk
about all sorts of little things connected with our wedding.
I told him about the tie
in which I like him most,
and about the dark suit
which best becomes him.
Andrew listened to all this gladly,
not because he wished to be flattered
but because he wanted me always to find him attractive,
and wanted to please me.

Then we looked together
in the window of a jeweler's shop,
where in little boxes,
inlaid with velvet,
jewelry was exhibited.
Among them were wedding rings.
We looked for a while in silence.
Then Andrew took me by the hand
and said, "Let's go in, Teresa;
we'll choose our rings".

ANDREW
And yet we did not go in at once,
held back by a thought which
—we felt this clearly—arose at the same time
in me and in her.

The rings in the window
appealed to us with a strange force. 
Now they are just artifacts of precious metal, but it will be so only until that moment when I put one of them on Teresa's finger, and she puts the other on mine. From then on they will mark our fate. They will constantly act as a reminder of the past, as a lesson to be memorized for good, and they will constantly open up the future, joining the past to the future. By the same token, they are, for all time, like two last links in a chain, to unite us invisibly.

So we did not enter the shop at once. The symbol spoke. We both understood it immediately. Looking at wedding rings, we yielded to emotion, without words. That was what held us up in front of the shop. We put off the moment of entry. I only felt Teresa cling more tightly to my shoulder . . and that was our "now": the meeting of the past with the future. Here we both are, we grow out of so many strange moments, as if from the depths of facts, ordinary and simple though they are. Here we are together. We are secretly growing into one because of these two rings.

Someone spoke quite loudly behind our backs.

**SOMEONE**
This is the jeweler's shop. What a strange craft. To produce objects that can stimulate reflection on fate. To gild watches, for instance, which measure time and tell man about the transience of all things and their passing.

**TERESA**
Someone ceased to speak. The man found his way, however, to the edge of our thoughts. We went on standing in silence.

Imagination worked, though. I already saw, as in a mirror, myself, in a white wedding dress, kneeling with Andrew, dressed in a black suit. As we entered the church I equaled him in height, in as much as there was no disproportion
(this was why I had to buy the high-heeled shoes I saw today in that other window).

And now—the strangest thing and unexpected: as we were standing thus in front of the jeweler’s we remembered fragments of letters written a few years ago.

3.

[Fragments of Teresa’s letter to Andrew]
... I want to return, Andrew, to our August hike, to that night when we heard those strange signals. You remember, there was some confusion and difference of opinion. Some thought that we ought to begin a search for wanderers who might be lost in the thick of the forest, while some, on the other hand, took the view that it had been a late bird calling, not a man. You were among the latter.

It was a memorable night, also memorable because it was then—it seems to me, Andrew—that I saw you in truth. And believe me, the contrasts dormant in you almost struck me in the face. A disproportion between the wish for happiness and a man’s potential is unavoidable. But you try to calculate your happiness at any price, just as you calculate everything in your planning office. You lack courage and trust—in whom? in life, in your own fate, in people, in God ... 

[Fragments of Andrew’s letter to Teresa]
... so you are courageous and full of trust—and yet how many times did I see tears in your face, though your eyes remained dry. Maybe you think you courageously reach for happiness, but in fact this is only another form of fear—or caution at least.

4.

TERESA
Imagination was working more and more intensely, ranging over reminiscences, over the past, to the future, whose picture was ever nearer. So, I see myself near Andrew, equal to him in height. We are both elegant and somehow mature—we matured through so many letters exchanged during those years. We are still standing in front of that shop, choosing our fate together. But the window has turned into a mirror of our future—it reflects its shape.

ANDREW
The wedding rings did not stay in the window.
The jeweler looked long into our eyes.
Testing for the last time the fineness of precious metal,
he spoke seriously, deep thoughts,
which remained strangely in my memory.

"The weight of these golden rings",
he said, "is not the weight of metal,
but the proper weight of man,
each of you separately
and both together.
Ah, man's own weight,
the proper weight of man!
Can it be at once heavier,
and more intangible?
It is the weight of constant gravity,
riveted to a short flight.
The flight has the shape of a spiral, an ellipse—and the shape of the heart …
Ah, the proper weight of man!
This rift, this tangle, this ultimate depth—
this clinging when it is so hard
to unstick heart and thought.
And in all this—freedom,
a freedom, and sometimes frenzy,
the frenzy of freedom trapped in this tangle.

And in all this—love,
which springs from freedom,
as water springs from an oblique rift in the earth.
This is man! He is not transparent,
not monumental,
not simple,
in fact he is poor.
This is one man—and what about two people,
four, a hundred, a million—
multiply all this
(multiply the greatness by the weakness)
and you will have the product of humanity,
the product of human life."

This is what the strange jeweler was saying
while taking the measure of our rings.
Then he cleaned them with chamois leather,
and put them back in the little box,
which had earlier been in the window,
and finally wrapped it in tissue paper.
All this while he looked into our eyes,
as if he wished to sound our hearts.
Was he right in saying all that?
Were his thoughts also ours?
I suppose neither of us could
think about it from such a distance—
love is enthusiasm rather than pensiveness.

TERESA
So, we are standing reflected in the window,
as if in a mirror that catches the future:
Andrew takes one of the rings,
I take the other, we take each other by the hand—
my God, how simple this is.

What can the people think invited to our wedding?
What do they think when they are silent—
and what will they go on thinking when they stop talking?

5.

CHORUS

1. The occasion is most beautiful,
it evokes so many associations.
   We are looking only at what is!

   2. Man lives with a shadow line,
      he lives also with a line of light.
      The light passes in to shadow,
      shadow into light.

3. New people—Teresa and Andrew—
two until now, but still not one,
one from now on, though still two.

   4. She seems sad, though,
      but perhaps she's just serious
      and moved—
      (a diamond flashed on Andrew's shirt front.
      a white flower in Teresa's hair,
      though it's a different flash).

5. Wine also sparkles. Wine is a thing.
   Let it live in the other man,
   man—is love. Teresa and Andrew
   wine, wine—
   radiant mutually into each other's lives.
   (Raise your glass.)
6. Ah, how many words and hearts
   ah, how many words and hearts
   ah, how many words and hearts

   And we’ll go on with you along the cloister
   we’ll go then down the avenue,
   a few score, a few hundred yards,
   with enthusiasm,
   with a sincere smile,
   up to now, up to now together.
   Later vehicles will appear,
   later a road will hinder us
   —when you get into the car
   you must stay alone.

7. But let us return to the stars,
   let us return to warmth, to feelings.
   Ah, how man thirsts for feelings,
   how people thirst for intimacy.
   Teresa and Andrew.

8. Trees, trees—straight, slender trunks,
   cutting high, high above the eyes
   cutting the moon distant from the eyes
   three hundred thousand miles—
   and yet they are two.
   Teresa and Andrew.
   The moon becomes a little drum
   that plays in the depths of eyes
   and in the depths of hearts.

9. Love—love pulsating in brows,
   in man becomes thought
   and will:
   the will of Teresa being Andrew,
   the will of Andrew being Teresa.

10. Strange, yet necessary
    —and again we move away from each other
    because man will not endure in man forever
    and man will not suffice.

11. How can it be done, Teresa,
    for you to stay in Andrew forever?
    How can it be done, Andrew,
    for you to stay in Teresa forever?
    Since man will not endure in man
    and man will not suffice.

12. Body—thought passes through it,
    is not satisfied in the body—
    and love passes through it.
Teresa, Andrew, seek  
a harbor for thought in your bodies  
while they last,  
seek the harbor for love.

ANDREW  
Though we were still standing in front of the jeweler’s shop … it was nonetheless clear  
that his shop window had ceased to be a display in which everyone without exception  
could find an object for himself. It became, however, a mirror reflecting us both—Teresa  
and myself. Moreover, it was not an ordinary flat mirror, but a lens absorbing its object.  
We were not only reflected but absorbed. I had an impression of being seen and  
recognized by someone hiding inside the shop window.

TERESA  
One could see in it our wedding day. We were both dressed in our Sunday best, and  
behind us there were a lot of people: they were wedding guests. The window absorbed  
my person at various moments and in different situations—first as I was standing, then  
kneeling by Andrew, when we were exchanging the rings … I am also convinced that  
our reflection in that mirror has remained forever, and cannot be extracted or removed.  
A little while later we concluded that we had been present in the mirror from the  
beginning—at any rate much sooner than the moment we stopped in front of the  
jeweler’s shop.

ANDREW  
And the jeweler, as I have already mentioned, looked at us in a peculiar way. His gaze  
was at once gentle and penetrating, I had a feeling he was watching us while he was  
selecting and weighing the rings. He then put them on our fingers to try them. I had the  
feeling that he was seeking our hearts with his eyes and delving into our past. Does he  
encompass the future too? The expression of his eyes combined warmth with  
determination. The future for us remains an unknown quantity, which we now accept  
without anxiety. Love has overcome anxiety. The future depends on love.

TERESA  
The future depends on love.

ANDREW  
At one point my eyes once more met the gaze of the old jeweler. I felt just then that His  
gaze was not only sounding our hearts, but also trying to impart something to us. We  
found ourselves not only on the level of His gaze, but also on the level of His life. Our  
whole existence stood before Him. His eyes were flashing signals which we were not  
able to receive fully just then, as once we had been unable to receive fully the signals in  
the mountains—and yet, they, reached to our inner hearts. And somehow we went in  
their direction, and they covered the fabric of our whole lives.
TERESA
We stood in front of the jeweler's shop for a long time, without noticing the time, or the cold of the October evening. At one point, though, we were roused by these words, spoken loudly by a passer-by behind our backs:

SOMEONE
It is late and the shops are closed. Why is the light still on in the old jeweler’s workshop? He too should lock up and go home.